The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance. 656

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah. 651 656 657

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige the fellah to improve his mind and his physique. 871

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, — and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him. 692

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his enforcement, or collects the exemption fine. 702

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security. 656

The Government system in its present form is less than a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live. 175 64

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns (not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the 643 645

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

535 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.